The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor in connection with the labor, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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LABOR'S GOAL!
To Repeal Taft-Hartley Law

Housing Starts Hit New Seasonal Low; Units Completed In '47 Double '46 Rate

Washington, D. C.—The number of new homes started in December dropped to 62,000, a decrease of 23 percent from the November level of activity, but still 58 percent greater than the number of housing starts recorded for December 1946, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Data on home completions during 1947 show a more remarkable improvement over the preceding year, the BLS reported. With the time required to make a new house ready for occupancy cut from 7 months and over in 1946 to about 4½ months in 1947, total completions rose to 934,000 units, almost twice the number completed during 1946.

BLS figures revealed that in the last quarter of 1947 more than 250,000 new dwellings were completed, 89,000 of them in the month of December.

The brisk rate of housebuilding in the summer and autumn months resulted in a total of 854,000 new permanent units being put under construction during 1947, which surpasses the 1946 achievement by 42 percent, and marks 1947 as the best homebuilding year since 1925 when 937,000 units were started.

Even with completions at a very high rate, the year-end level of housing started during the last half of the year was great enough to leave a total of 390,500 dwelling units still under construction at the end of 1947, 70,000 more than at the end of 1946.

Early indications from local building permit reports are that homebuilding decreased in December in nearly all parts of the country except the Pacific coast and some southern regions. Among the large cities showing a substantial drop in December were Cleveland, N. Y.; New York City and Rochester, N. Y.; Evanston, Ill.; Gary and South Bend, Ind.; Miami Beach, Fla.; Alexandria, Va.; and Knoxville, Tenn. Despite the onset of the winter seasonal decline in housing activity, some cities showed large increases in the number of new dwelling units for which permits were issued in December. Among these were Bayside, Mass.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Arlington and Lynchburg, Va.; Meridian, Miss.; Memphis, Tenn.; Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Okla. Increases of 50 percent, and marks 1947 as the best

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Food Cost For Family of 3 At $670 Record High in '47

Washington, D. C.—The yearly cost of food for a worker's family of three hit a new all-time high of $670 calculated on the basis of prices prevailing in December, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

This figure compares with $540.47 in the five years, 1935-39, and $528.28 in 1946, the bureau said.

Each month for more than 40 years BAE has figured the cost of feeding an average family of three.

The so-called "market basket" includes the quantities of food an average family of three consumed in the 1935-1939 period.

Thus the $670 cost last month may be less than actually is being spent, because BAE has reported several times that the average food consumption last year was considerably higher than prewar.

These foods fall into six classifications, in turn broken down into separate items. The classifications are:

1. Meat products (three items, beef, lamb and pork.)
2. Dairy products (four items, butter, cheese, fluid milk and evaporated milk.)
3. Poultry and eggs.
4. Cereals, including bakery products (four items) and "other cereal products (eight items).
5. Fruits and vegetables (23 items, including fresh fruits and vegetables and canned fruits and vegetables.)
6. Miscellaneous products (seven items, such as sirup, margarine, cooking oils, sugar, peanut butter, coffee and cocoa.)

Since November 1946, soon after price controls and consumer subsidies were lifted, the cost of the family market basket has been steadily rising.

In that month it reached a new all-time high of $635—the previous high having been $615 in June 1920.

Out of the $664 spent at the retail store at the October figures, the farmer got $366.92 or 55 cents out of each dollar. The grower's share varied with each type of food. For meat products he got 72 cents out of each dollar; for dairy products 66 cents; for poultry and eggs 61 cents. But he only got 29 cents out of each dollar spent for bakery products and 22 cents out of each consumer dollar spent for canned goods.

In 1935-1939 the farmer got only 41 cents out of each dollar spent for food at retail.

"Prices of farm products probably will average as high in 1948 as in 1947," BAE predicted.

Workers Over 45 to Face Unemployment If Nation Suffers Economic Recession

Washington, D. C.—Workers 45 years of age and older, who represent more than one-third of the nation's present labor force, will be hit particularly hard by any slowdown in business activity resulting in unemployment, Ewan Clague, U. S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics, declared.

In an article appearing in "Labor Review," a Labor Department publication, he predicted that any displacement from their jobs of this age group will create a "national problem of the greatest importance."

The problem will eventually arise, he said, because:

1. It's a fact that streamlining of the American industrial system is pushing "a very considerable number of workers in their forties out of their jobs and their careers," and

2. These declared "will usually result reaching 65. At 45 the "average man has ahead of him over 20 years of life."

The eventual choice that will have to be made, Mr. Clague said, is either to have a permanent 65-year retirement age under the Social Security system to "remove those older workers from the labor market," or to continued.

take steps "to assure the continued usefulness of these age groups as productive workers."

It will not take any major depression to bring the problem to a head, either. Mr. Clague predicted. Even a "business setback" with 5,000,000 unemployed "lasting only a year or so will do it, he predicted.

Then the unemployment will cause deep concern as to the impact "on unemployment insurance and reserves," he said. "In succeeding periods of recession with substantial levels of unemployment will not disappear, but instead will tend to increasingly stubborn and difficult question.

The employment needs of the aged will speedily concert this into a national problem of the greatest importance."

There was a time when all this took care of itself, he pointed out. "Men died quickly and usually were high, so a person 45 years old was "one of the few survivors in his age group."

But now with the life span much longer, the population larger, machines to help and a working people do, he declared, with the result that there is less purchasing power at work.

Then consumer co-ops got big enough and numerous enough, Mr. Calhoun said, their competition can force other business to be content with "regular" profits. What would have been big dividends for the few will become savings in the hands of the many, and people will be able to buy more goods and keep the factory wheels turning, he said.

Mr. Norlin, speaking to McCalmont, co-ops have grown so large that they can afford to give a reduction of 10 percent to meat and manufacturing plants," he declared. "Men of ability to step into executive positions, the co-op spokesman said. Profits its go mostly into the hands of weakly persons, who don't spend much money as workers. Even as a people do, he declared, with the result that there is less purchasing power at work.

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The organized labor in this country will really throw its strength behind the co-operative movement, he said. In Norway, American co-ops will "probably be able to do the same," McCalmont predicted.

Executive Council To Plan Legislative, Political Fight

Woll Denounces State Labor Legislation As Part of NAM Attempt to Cripple Labor

New York City—Matthew Woll, a member of the AFL Executive Council, declared that virtually every one of the labor relations legislation enacted by the various states "is soundly conceived with the best interest of labor, management, and the public in mind."

Mr. Woll's charge was contained in the first of a series of articles on the general topic, "Labor and the Law," to be published monthly by the Workers Education Bureau of America.

Asserting that the "rash of labor relations bills that appeared in state legislatures" was part of the AFL's campaign "to throttle organized labor at the local and state as well as at the national level," Mr. Woll stressed the fallacies of this anti-labor legislation and the need for action by labor organizations to combat it. He said:

"It is important to recognize the relation of state labor relations legislation to the national problem. In addition to labor-management relations problems, legislative activity has been placed on the need for improved workmen's compensation laws, minimum wage and hour regulations, safety legislation, administration of unemployment compensation laws, and proper child-labor standards.

"It is significant that at the fourteenth annual Conference on Labor Legislation in Washington on December 9 and 10, 1947, labor representatives and other conferees generally declared that state legislation had been carefully considered in the existing relationships that had been established for the welfare of labor, the labor, management, and the public in many states.

"Not one of the anti-closed-shop laws prohibits not only closed-shop agreements, but also union-security agreements such as the union shop and maintenance of membership.

"Union members and officers generally will recognize that much of the legislation referred to above is sound and socially and politically constructive. Virtually none of it is soundly based and with the best interest of labor, management, and the public in mind."

state government by injunction had been restored, and they criticized the various state enactments aimed at wage-earners and labor organizations.

Mr. Woll reviewed briefly the extent to which union activities have been curbed by state action.

"Most of the industrial relations legislation places restrictions on union activities. Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Texas each enacted five types of laws or provisions, and four restrictive measures were passed in each of the following states: Delaware, Michigan, and North Dakota. Three of the types were passed in each of 11 states: Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin.

"Anti-closed-shop laws were enacted by 14 states; laws restricting picketing and other strike activities were enacted by 12 states, and secondary boycotts were prohibited by 11 states. Six states placed restrictions on jurisdictional disputes; 11 states enacted special laws relating to labor relations in public utilities, and 6 states prohibited strikes by public employees, while 3 states require registration of labor unions.

"In most cases the anti-closed-shop laws prohibit not only closed-shop agreements, but also union-security agreements such as the union shop and maintenance of membership.

"Union members and officers generally will recognize that much of the legislation referred to above is sound and socially and politically constructive. Virtually none of it is soundly based and with the best interest of labor, management, and the public in mind."

NLRB Seeks Nation-Wide Injunction Against AFL's Typographical Union

Washington, D. C.—Robert N. Denham, general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board, expanded and intensified his campaign against the AFL's International Typographical Union by requesting a nation-wide injunction against the union.

The injunction, if granted, will successfully tie the hands of the union and prevent it from conducting a wide range of activities pending settlement by the NLRB of the dispute between the union and the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

Woodward Kingman, president of union, blasted the requested injunction as one which "asks that the ITU be restrained from everything the publisher aside claim we are doing that they do not like."

Terming the NLRB a "Simon Legree" employer, Kingman said: "Even a press in the newspaper field, Randolph pledged the ITU to use every legal means to preserve its freedom. He said:

"After years of legal persecution, Congress adopted the Norris-LaGuardia law preventing abuses by injunction. The NLRB does not now enforce that, but gives bureaucrats authority to stymie all decent trade union activity."

The requested injunction seeks to enjoin ITU officers from making agreements calling for the posting of conditions of employment as substitutes from "regular" ordering, calling, advocating or counseling "featherbedding" and specifically the old standing contract rule of "bogus" in newspaper publishing plants. Under this rule advertising material must be set up although matrixes have been furnished to the publisher.

The alleged attempt of the union to have publishers hire only union foremen is sought to be restrained.

It is further sought to restrain the union from "urging, ordering, calling, advocating or counseling employees, employers or other persons to refuse to perform their normal duties" and from "conduct engaged in other sections of the petition."

The petition asks that the union be restrained "from taking or causing to be taken any action which would obstruct or render ruguatory the final adjudication" by the board of the unfair labor practice charges in said complaint.

The petition asserts that the acts of the union officers have led to strikes since Aug. 22 in various cities.

It is further contended that continuation of the union's actions would "irreparably damage to the public" of the act," the petition adds.

Labor Support for Co-operatives Urged To Combat Inflation and Unemployment

New Haven, Conn.—Labor's support for consumer co-operatives was urged here as a means of preventing unemployment which would result from cutbacks in production schedules.

This was the view expressed by Walter Backman, executive secretary of the New Haven Co-op and former economist in Eugene Cunningham's address to Local 90 of the AFL's Electrical Workers.

"I don't mean just co-op grocery stores," McCalmont made it clear. "I mean plenty of co-ops of all kinds: consumer co-op gas stations, department stores and manufacturing plants," he declared.

High profits are the most important cause of our business depressions, the co-op spokesman said. Profits its go mostly into the hands of wealthy persons, who don't spend much money as workers. Even as a people do, he declared, with the result that there is less purchasing power at work.

Then consumer co-ops get big enough and numerous enough, McCalmont said, their competition can force other business to be content with "regular" profits. What would have been big dividends for the few will become savings in the hands of the many, and people will be able to buy more goods and keep the factory wheels turning, he said.

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The organized labor in this country will really throw its strength behind the co-operative movement, he said. In Norway, American co-ops will "probably be able to do the same," McCalmont predicted.

President Urges Congress to Approve Transfer of USES to Labor Department

Washington, D. C.—President Truman asked Congress to approve a reorganization plan placing the United States Employment Service and the Bureau of Employment Security in the Labor Department on a permanent basis.

"This plan will place the administration of the employment service and unemployment compensation functions of the Federal government in the most appropriate location within the executive establishment, and will provide for their proper coordination," the President told Congress.

The President also asked for appointment of a $19,000-a-year commissioner of employment security, the employment service and unemployment insurance activities in the Labor Department.

Under the proposed reorganization plan, the permanent transfer will be effective within 60 days unless Senate and House veto the plan.

The USES originally was set up by the Department of Labor in 1933 and transferred to Federal Security Agency two years later. Afterwards it became a unit of the War Manpower Commission and then with the end of the war was shifted back to Labor by executive order.

In his message, the President said that a nation-wide system of public employment offices which assist workers to find jobs and employers to obtain labor belongs under the Labor Department. He added that the department "already has within its organization the bulk of the skills and resources needed for the performance of this task." He stated that he considers it "necessary and desirable" that the unemployment security and employment security functions be added to the offices.

The President pointed out that employment offices "are the heart of the employment offices more than ever before." He said a practical matter the functions of the Bureau of Employment Security and the Employment Service relating to unemployment compensation "have proved to be intimately related to those of the United States Employment Service."

Local President Says ITU Will Raise $30,000,000 to Assure Its Existence

Washington, D. C.—The International Typographical Union will raise as much as $30 million to protect its existence and to take whatever action if necessary, declared James J. O'Connor, president of the ITU at a press conference in Washington.

O'Connor pointed out that the ITU spent $6 million to win the 8-hour day in 1906 and $12 million to win the 44-hour week in 1921-1922, and that the members will contribute whatever if it is needed to continue the existence of the union with the funds accumulated through the years.

It is his strength that the union which is distributed to all members, O'Connor went on to vote for the special assessment of 4½ percent on their wages, which will be voted upon February 18 by members all over the country in a referendum ballot, and for the purpose of defraying expenses and defending the autonomy of the union under the auspices of the Taft-Hartley law.

Columbia Typographical Union, at its meeting Jan. 11, endorsed his recommendation. As one member said, the U. S. Supreme Court in the Taft law is holding a gun at the head of the union and ordering: "Your money or your union." Printers, O'Connor says, have never hesitated to preserve and protect their union.

Employers are taking advantage of the provisions of the law, says O'Connor, with appeals to the NLRB, and are either trying to invade the union its treasury, both of which, he says, add up to the same thing.

The ITU, he points out, requires a referendum vote of its members to change the rate of dues, which includes assessments. To accomplish this the union furnishes members in all shops in this country and Canada with ballots, in order that they may vote on any proposed change in dues.

In 1906, O'Connor says, the International Typographical Union had a membership of 42,000 for the 8-hour day, and when it was over, it had 70,000 members. It was found that members had contributed $4,000,000 to the union's treasury during the strike. In 1921, when the ITU launched its fight for shorter workweek, it cost to members, from their pay envelopes, totaled $17,000,000, and they won the 44-hour week, not only for printers, but for all printing trades workers and other workers.

Local unions, O'Connor says, are still working many members of the union who have not had an increase in 1906 and 1921, all of whom will vote on the special assessment coming up. Younger members of the union, who do not realize the seriousness of the situation, may question the necessity, but he predicts the vote will be overwhelmingly in favor of the assessment.

ILGWU LAUNCHES DRIVE TO ORGANIZE NEW SHOPS

New York City—The International Ladies Garment Workers Union launched an intensive organizing drive in the metropolitan area to obtain any possible spread of open shop conditions which might result from the withdrawal of several from manufacturers from their trade associations which have union shop contracts with the ILGWU.

The ILGWU is the biggest union in this city. It has 175,000 members in and around New York, of whom 80,000 are employed in the dress industry. Julius Hochman, manager of the New York Dress Joint Board, said the organizing effort would be aimed at both jobbers and contractors and would cover nearly states.

GI BUSINESS LOANS TOTAL $273,000,000 IN 2 YEARS

Washington, D. C.—The Veterans Administration reported it had approved more than $5,000 GI business loans amounting to $273,000,000 in the two years the loan program has been in operation.

In that period, 10,886 loans totaling $23,157,600 have been repaid in full. Defaults and apparent defaults have amounted to $2,753, but through Nov. 30, only 2,231 claims had been paid by VA, it said. They represented a loss of $2,232,263 which will be offset partially by liquidation of borrowers' assets.

The average business loan was $2,200. Eighty-seven percent was nonreal estate loans averaging $2,600 each. Realty loans averaged $6,900.

Director for Labor's Political League To Be Selected

Miami.—Legislative and political problems held the limelight as the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor met behind closed doors in order to order by President William Green at the opening of its annual mid-winter meeting here.

The council is expected to consider and pass judgment upon the self-standing measures now pending before Congress. After these decisions are made and other internal problems are disposed of, the council will select the duties of the Administrative Committee of Labor's League for Political Education, the draft committee plans for the AFL's political activities in the 1948 campaign.

Foremost among the matters on the agenda of the LLPE conference are the drafting of a political program and the choice of an executive director of the league. Mr. Green is the national chairman and AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany will be the active executive for the league, but a full-time executive director is needed to carry out planning, is being sought, as well as an assistant director. It is thoroughly familiar with the AFL's political and organizational structure.

On the legislative front, the Executive Council is expected to give a strong endorsement to the Marshall Plan, with the proviso that labor and other interests have a voice and at least an advisory voice in its administration.

The inflation crisis will come in for a great deal of attention as the increasing cost of living already has wiped out most wage gains of union members. The big question will be whether the Executive Council will go so far as to support demands for the revival of price controls.

Two reduction proposals will also come under review by the Executive Council, as well as suggestions that excess profits taxes be reimposed as a brake upon inflation.

Unquestionably, the Executive Council will renew its stand upon the Taft-Hartley Act and call for its repeal, although the making up of the present Congress indicates the likelihood of such action at this session.

The Executive Council will also express its views on the drive for enactment of universal military training, which in the past has been strongly opposed by labor.

In addition to these matters, it is expected that the Executive Council will receive a report consisting of a comprehensive long-range housing program, long-range economy and an increase of the federal minimum wage to at least 75 cents an hour. It is also likely that the Executive Council will extend its thanks for the efforts of the unions representing government workers to obtain pay increases made necessary by higher living costs.

PRICE CONTROL IS AFL RADIO TOPIC

Washington, D. C.—The topic chosen for discussion on "America Unite," the half-hour AFL broadcast over ABC Jan. 25 is, "Should Price Controls Be Restored?"

Taking part in the round-table discussion will be Representative Jacob K. Javits of New York; Raymond Gram Swing, commentator; Farm Bureau Federation; Dr. Emerson P. Schmidt, representing the U. S. Chamber of Commerce; and Boris Shishkin, AFL economist.

The program is broadcast over the nation-wide network of the National Broadcasting Company each Sunday from 1-1:30 p.m. EST. Local stations carry broadcast for the exact time of the broadcast in your community.

AFL PATTERNMAKERS GAIN SEPARATE UNIT

Washington, D. C.—The National Labor Relations Board will soon establish a separate bargaining unit for AFL patternmakers employed who voted to split away from the CIO industrial union which they were bargained for them.

The election conducted by the NLRB at the Westinghouse Electric Company, 18 of the 19 patternmakers employed voted to separate from the CIO.

George Q. Lynch, president of the International Association, said that the balloting vindicated a fight he has carried on for 13 years with the NLRB.

"I have always been confident," he declared, "that some day Congress and the courts would see the fairness of the stand taken by those IBs myself who believe that the crafts have a right to their own bargaining units. The Taft-Hartley law, which I opposed on other grounds, is now clear-cut on the craft issue."

MORE AFFIDAVITS FILED UNDER TAFT-HARTLEY LAW

Washington, D. C.—The number of non-Communist affidavits filed by unions under the Taft-Hartley law has doubled since November, it was reported.

Representative Gerald Landis disclosed that the NLRB has received a total of 29,418 affidavits from officers of AFL, CIO and independent unions. The most recent tabulation announced by the board dated Nov. 1, listed a total of 11,086.

Mr. Landis said affidavits had been received from 20,954 local and international officers of AFL unions, 1,789 from those of the CIO, and 6,715 from independents.

AFL LOCAL ACQUIRES NEW HEADQUARTERS

New York City—Capt. William C. Dennis, business representative of Local 88 of the AFL's Masters, Mates and Pilots of America, announced that the local had bought a building here for its permanent headquarters.

During World War II the building was a medical center for the War Shipping Administration. A progressive educational program for the local's 5,000 members will be provided without cost in the new quarters, Captain Ash announced. Schoolroom and lecture halls will occupy a large part of the building.

NLRB CERTIFIES AFL AS BARGAINING AGENT

Washington, D. C.—The National Labor Relations Board certified the American Federation of Labor as bargaining representative for 176 employes of E. W. Evans & Son, Philadelphia, although only one-third of them participated in the election.

The 5-member board unanimously rejected the employer's request to set aside the election on the grounds that it was "not representative." The AFL received a majority of the 57 votes cast.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

SUPPLEMENT

WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 1948 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer

LABOR'S GOAL! To Repeal Taft-Hartley Law

LABOR AND HOUSING

By RICHARD GRAY

President, AFL Building and Construction Trades Department

The following is the first part of a series of excerpts taken from testimony presented before the Joint Committee on Housing by Richard Gray, president of the AFL's Building and Construction Trades Department.

Mr. Gray's testimony ably refuted the baseless charges frequently made to the effect that the building trades unions have been responsible for the delays and high costs involved in home building. This presentation of labor's side of the story on the construction industry will be of interest to all readers of the labor press.

The present housing shortage is deeply rooted in the conditions that prevailed for many years before the war, and represents a grave unmet problem long before the war began. This shortage was greatly aggravated by wartime conditions and numerous maladjustments which grew out of the war. The attempts to solve the problem since the war ended were seriously handicapped by dislocations in the postwar economy.

Let me say at the very outset that hostile attitudes toward the building industry are consistently made every effort to aid in the promulgation of agreements and policies designed to achieve the maximum volume of home building; to improve the quality of performances; to assure the best and fullest supply of mechanics and laborers needed in home construction, and to achieve stability.

This program of American Federation of Labor unions was not a token program, nor was it confined to words. It represented the considered effort of unions who have attempted in the best way they knew how to render real service to the community and to the industry.

I would like to have the opportunity to inform the committee about some of the important aspects of the housing problem in which labor has had primary responsibility.

APPRENTICE TRAINING

The national apprenticeship program is a cooperative effort in which labor and employers are jointly engaged. The record shows, however, that organized labor has been consistently the initiator of local as well as national programs designed to provide a firm and lasting basis for a steady supply of properly trained journeymen in the various trades.

The record of the apprentice training program since the end of the war is indeed remarkable especially when one considers the many difficulties and obstacles with which the industry was beset in recent years. In 1947, more than 2,500 local apprenticeship councils were jointly established by labor and employers in the building trades unions and crafts in all parts of the country. According to the Apprentice Training Service the following is the record of growth in the number of building trades apprentices in training, as reported from June, 1946, to November, 1947:

	June 1946	Nov. 1947
Total apprentices reported	49,092	112,221
Wood trades	24,946	41,085
Electrical trades	9,027	16,937
Pipe trades	4,742	10,566
Trowel trades	5,487	15,479
Paint trades	4,470	8,967
Sheet metal trades	2,503	8,029
Other trades	1,911	4,778

Thus, as the reports of the Apprentice Training Service of the Department of Labor indicate, the number of building trades apprentices employed was more than doubled in a period of 18 months.

There is evidence, however, that the actual progress has been much greater than these reports indicate. The reason for this is that the Apprentice Training Service does not receive reports from many of the smaller towns and trade areas in which effective apprenticeship programs are under way. The A. F. of L. Building and Construction Trades Department has just conducted a questionnaire survey in an attempt to determine the actual number of apprentices employed in January 1948. Due to the shortness of time only a few complete returns have been received to date. But these indicate a much greater progress in the apprenticeship program than reported to the government.

It is often erroneously stated that the unions are responsible for maintaining a rigid ratio between a number of apprentices permitted in proportion to the number of journeymen in the trade. The fact is that this is not borne out by experience and is by no means dictated by the union concerned. In this connection these points must be noted:

(1) The employer always prefers to have seasoned workers on the job. The apprenticeship agreement places a financial burden not only on the union but on the employer which he is often reluctant to assume.

(2) The training of the apprentice must give him proper supervision and actual experience in order to be of value to him. Too many apprentices with not enough supervision from a journeyman would gain little skill, would prove highly unproductive and would be a source of waste and poor workmanship of quality.

(3) Apprenticeship training must lead to employment at the trade the apprentice learns. When unemployment in construction is high, as has been the case for many years before the war, the apprentice who has learned his work for them would have been wasteful and a bitter loss of time and effort to the apprentice himself.

Rise in Labor Productivity; Clague Predicts Gain in '48

Washington, D. C.—Ewan Clague, U. S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics, reported progress in the drive for increased productivity in American industry and forecast that given favorable conditions in 1948 productivity gains should be substantial.

In a section of his regular monthly statement on the employment situation, Mr. Clague emphasized that "a great many refrigerators affect influence productivity changes," the importance of which factors may vary widely from industry to industry. He said:

"Labor has probably been the factor most in the public eye. It is encouraging to note that surveys of management opinion have reported a steady improvement in the efficiency of workers during 1946 and 1947. In a continuing climate of favorable labor relations, there would be obvious that further improvements will come with additional experience on peacetime jobs.

"During the war, a large number of persons in the most productive age groups went into the armed services and were, in many cases, replaced by others with little or no industrial experience. Subsequently, there was an inevitable reduction in the average skill and job experience of the average worker. At the same time, as soon as another training process had to take place as veterans were reabsorbed, as work workers returned to their former pursuits, and as industry was redirected to civilian production.

"Experience on the job is also important to the supervisory labor force and to management, and for these groups also the stresses of war and reconversion were a handicap.

"Irregular production schedules caused by shortages of materials have also adversely affected productivity. This was especially true in those industries with their dependence on line assembly and precise scheduling are most vulnerable to supply shortages.

"These are essentially short-run factors, however. It is improved technology, applied to production, which in the long run creates the substantial gains in productivity characteristic of this American economy.

"There is now evidence of rapid improvement in this respect. In terms of 1939 prices, private expenditures for producers' durable equipment amounted to $6 billion in 1929 and 84% billion in 1939, reached $10 billion in 1940 and about $15 billion in 1947. The full benefits of these improvements in our industrial plant will not be felt until all the new equipment is placed in full operation, but they should eventually yield a substantial improvement in productivity."

Nonfarm Employment Put at 43,944,000; December Total Is Highest In History

Washington, D. C.—Nonagricultural employment scored the greatest monthly gain of the year during December and reached the highest level ever recorded in the nation's history, 43,944,000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

Persons holding nonfarm jobs totaled a million more than in December, 1946, the BLS reported, with manufacturing industries accounting for slightly more than half of the increase.

The usual pre-Christmas business activity stimulated the rise in employment reported for the month of December, the report showed, although it was noted that retail and wholesale trade establishments was the only approximately as recorded for December, 1946.

Two other employment records were set as a result of the December increase. Adding 15,000 workers, the manufacturing industries broke the 1 million mark for the first time in its history. In manufacturing industries as a whole, the 15.9 million jobs reported in mid-December established a new peacetime mark. The BLS statement continued:

"Bad weather, which limited outdoor activities in many parts of the country, was reflected in the relatively large seasonal decline in construction employment between November and December. Although the drop of nearly 100,000 was greater than that during the same period in 1946, construction contractors were nevertheless employing substantially more workers at the end of 1947 than a year earlier.

"Employment in basic iron and steel leveled off during the month, but there was considerable activity in most of the fabricating industries. With the end of the pendulum boy season, radio manufacturing establishments put on large numbers of their virtually all other machinery industries reported peak production and employment. Small seasonal declines were also reported by food processing camps and sawmills, as well as by textile, apparel, and leather industries.

"Of the nondurable goods division, seasonal reductions in a number of the industries, including petroleum, dairy products, flour, sugar refining, and beverages, were more than counterbalanced by gains in several other industry groups. Employment in the textile-apparel-leather group rose by 30,000 in December as a result largely of early spring and fall. Heavy orders placed by the trade caused many workers by textile mills; woolen and worsted plants put on extra shifts in order to meet demands. Reversing the usual seasonal pattern, most of the apparel industries increased their work force during the month. Layoffs were reported by the men's clothing industry, however, because of material shortages."

Denham Rules Union Officers Must Renew Non-Communist Affidavits

Washington, D. C.—Officers of local and national unions are faced with red tape and time consuming administrative delays as the result of another strict interpretation of the Taft-Hartley law issued by Robert N. Denham, general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board.

The latest headache for these 65,000 union officers is the requirement that they must refile the non-Communist affidavits with the NLRB upon reelection to office.

Denham disclosed that a strict interpretation of the Taft-Hartley affidavits of the officers of the more than 200 nation-wide unions and the hundreds of thousands of local union officers all must submit new affidavits disavowing communism at the start of new terms. Even those elected to the unions recently must do the same. Failure to do so closes the doors of the NLRB to the union or the local branch.

Terms of officers of a vast number of unions expired December 31, for example. The Denham interpretation casually may not officially be sworn until late in January.

"In that case we consider the old officers to be still in control and don't immediately file the new oath of non-communicance," Denham said. "Plus the new officers are new, so they have to get the affidavits. Any other interpretation would be out of the question."

The terms of the AFL's only officers—President William Green and Secretary-Treasurer George Meany—begin with the October convention and run until next fall.

Nonfarm Employment Put at 43,944,000; December Total Is Highest In History

Washington, D. C.—Nonagricultural employment scored the greatest monthly gain of the year during December and reached the highest level ever recorded in the nation's history, 43,944,000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

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Green Asks Extra Hour Work Daily To Increase Production

Green Backs European Recovery Plan Urges Active Participation by Labor

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green strongly urged the Congress to act favorably on the proposed European Recovery Program, and asked for labor participation in operations under the plan.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Green declared that the AFL "is in favor of the European Recovery Program" and asked for labor participation in its operations.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Green also reiterated the stand of the AFL Executive Council and the AFL convention of Labor endorsing the Marshall Plan as an aid to world recovery.

To implement the European Recovery Program, Mr. Green proposed the following:

1. Administration of the ERP should be the responsibility of a new federal agency free of the normal red tape and bureaucratic procedures. The administrator of the ERP, appointed by the President, should have an advisory board composed of labor, business, farm, and government representatives.

2. A special labor-management relative should be named to cooperate with the administrator. The staff there should be appointed representatives of labor, farmers, and industry.

3. Preference should be given to American ships manned by American crews in the transportation of supplies destined for Europe. Transfer should not be made available to any part of totalitarian institutions including Russia.

Warning that the Soviet Union stands ready to pounce upon a paralyzed and economically prostrate Europe, Mr. Green urged measures to aid the development of free trade unions and told of the AFL activities for this purpose. Emphasizing the need for labor participation in the operation of the ERP, Mr. Green declared:

"We urge particularly this responsibility for American labor because American labor can best assure the workers of Europe of the integrity of government's purposes and guarantee that the assistance will be given as follow. The greatest menace to the European relief plan is the communist fifth column active in all the countries receiving it. This fifth column will call strikes, try to seize governments control, and throw governments and industries into chaos.

"Plans to sabotage recovery, such as Protocol M, and propaganda against western democracy, originate from central headquarters outside the countries to be helped. American Federation of Labor believes we can perform an indispensable service in gaining the cooperation of free trade unions in those 16 countries and in Germany.

"The American Fed ration of Labor understands that the European Recovery Program requires sacrifices and self-discipline on the part of United States citizens. We stand ready to make these sacrifices and to assume new responsibilities. We cannot shut our eyes to the sorrow and hunger that are the daily portion of millions who are also victims of armed soviet aggression. We cannot stand by and watch the lights of freedom go out in those lands from which the ancestors of millions came. The civilization of those nations became a rich heritage for us and to them we are indebted for such institutions as rule by law, representation and majority rule, and a culture that has enriched our own experience."

Consumer Price Gouging Continues; Retail and Wholesale Prices Hit Peaks

Washington, D. C.—There has been no let-up in the consumer-gouging high price situation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Bureau of Statistics.

The BLS consumers' price index hit a new high between mid-November and mid-December, according to preliminary figures just released. The BLS index December stood at a level 167 percent t of the 1935-39 average, 4 percent above June, 6 per cent higher than August 1939, and 11 percent over the 1945 peak.

The increase in retail prices of goods purchased by wage earners and clerical income families during the month drove the index 7 percent above May 1947. Since that time the index has shown a steadily rising trend reversal of the high price trend.

Price increases were recorded for all major groups of items. Retail food prices increased about 8 percent between June and mid-November to mid-December, to bring the food index to above 209 percent of the 1935-39 average. Higher prices for fats and oils, eggs, dairy products and fruits and vegetables were largely responsible for the rise. Prices of meats and other food items advanced fractionally. Prices of fuel, oil, and oils, eggs and meats usually declined in December.

It is estimated that prices of apparel, housefurnishings, fuels and miscellaneous goods and services increased less than 1 percent on the average. Rents continued to rise slightly.

Just to make the outlook for the consumer still more dismal, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported another jump in wholesale prices which, in turn, will be reflected in still higher retail prices in the months ahead.

A BLS report for the week ended January 17 revealed that prices in the nation's primary markets jumped again for the fourth consecutive week. The wholesale price index now stands at a new postwar high 10.5 percent of the 1926 average.

Proposal Conditioned Upon Overtime Pay, Inflation Curb

Washington, D. C. — William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, proposed that labor and industry negotiate agreements providing for the lengthening of the work-day by one hour as a means of stimulating production.

The AFL leader made it clear that his suggestion for a longer work period was predicated upon two assumptions:

1. That the Congress would take effective action to curb any further increase in the cost of living.

2. The additional hour of work produced would be paid for at time-and-a-half overtime rate of time and one-half.

Mr. Green advanced his proposal for consideration before the Senate Banking Committee on several bills to curb inflation which he declared the most urgent question confronting the country today.

He called for prompt and vigorous action by Congress to halt the inflationary trend and to reduce the cost of living. He urged re-imposition of the excess profits tax on corporations, tax relief for the lower brackets and the imposition of consumer goods in short supply, inventory control allocations of scarce commodities, price control over selected commodities, the curbing of speculation in commodity markets, credit controls and extension and strengthening of rent controls.

Declaring that American workers had suffered a decline in real wages and a reduced standard of living since the war, Mr. Green said:

"Organized labor prefers by far that the cost of living be reduced rather than that it to be forced to ask for further wage increases. However, unless a forceful program is quickly adopted, labor has no alternative but to demand a rise in wage compensation, proportionate to the rise in living costs.

Backing up his suggestion that the workday be lengthened by one hour with overtime pay for the extra period, Mr. Green said:

"Such agreements would make possible a substantial increase in the rate of production of goods and services, without a proportionate increase in the unit cost.

"Addition of one hour per day with overtime pay would be inflationary because by making an unintelligent use of overhead and equipment the per unit cost of the goods produced in the extra hour would more than absorb the overtime compensation.

Even if such agreements were extended to only half of the nearly 16,000,000 workers currently employed in manufacturing, there would be an addition of 8,000,000 manhours of production a day, Mr. Green calculated, so that scarcities of industrial materials would be lessened. He conceded that his proposal might not be practical in industries where continuous operations or seasonal conditions prevailed.

The tax program presented by the President was endorsed by the AFL chieftain in particular because the American program embodied in the Knutson tax bill and Mr. Green made it clear that he concurred with many of the recommendations made by the chief executive's 10-point anti-inflation program.

In connection with his call for reduction in the cost of living, Mr. Green said he felt that such a tax accompanied by other anti-inflation actions showing substantial reduction in prices would be extremely worthy of study and consideration.

Supporting his contention that the standard of living has declined since the war, the AFL chieftain asserted:

"Between the average year of 1939 and 1944 with 1940), we find that while the weekly earnings in manufacturing, averaging $46.08 in 1944 rose to $61.31 in 1947, an increase of 11 percent, the cost of living, as measured by the consumers' price index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, rose 31 percent. In other words, the average worker in manufacturing was earning $2.25 a week more for 1947 than he did in 1944. But to buy the same goods and services that he bought in 1944, it took $1.31 in 1947. So between 1944 inflation, the average factory worker's weekly pay, after taking away $2.25 added to $29.08, a decrease of $7.03, or 15.3 percent. In terms of goods and services he could buy, the average worker in manufacturing was 15 percent worse off in 1947 as compared with 1944.

"As a matter of fact, during this period the standard of living of the average American suffered a substantial decline, due to inflated prices. According to the Department of Commerce figures, the average per capita disposable personal income in 1944 was $1,057, rising to $1,219 in 1947, a gain of 15.3 percent. But again measured in 1944 dollars, the real buying power of the 1947 disposable income shrank to about $968, a decline of $92 or 8 percent."

Plans Set for Union-Industries Show; Success Assured for Milwaukee Event

Washington, D. C.—I. M. Ornburn, secretary-treasurer of the AFL's Union Label Trades Department, has submitted a progress report on plans for the Union Industries Show to be held May 12-16, in Milwaukee, Wis.

Mr. Ornburn's statement was prepared for submission to the annual winter meeting of the AFL Executive Council. The Union Label Trades Department official, who is also serving as director of the Milwaukee Exhibition, declared:

"Requests for exhibit space have exceeded all our expectations, but we are reserving a limited amount to display booths for unions or management that have not had sufficient opportunity to reach a final decision. Every available space on the floor of the Milwaukee Auditorium will be rented long before the opening date, and those desiring to participate should send in their applications immediately.

"All of the outstanding exhibitors who participated in the Los Angeles exhibition are coming into the Milwaukee show. Many new union concerns have contracted for space. A new feature of the Milwaukee exhibition, which is an excellent example for other industrial communities, will be the booths in which both union manufacturers and management will jointly share the expense of the exhibit. Arrangements are being completed with unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor to provide adequate space to display their Union Label products and demonstrate Union Services."

GEORGE REELECTED HEAD OF GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

Washington, D. C.—Leo E. George, chairman of the National Federation of Postoffice Clerks, and all other officers of the AFL's Government Employes Council were unanimously reelected.

Other officers are: Vice-chairman, William F. Doherty, National Association of Letter Carriers; secretary-treasurer, Foster J. Pratt, International Federation of Technical Engineers, Architects and Draftsmen's Union.

AFL BUILDING TRADES TO AID JEWISH GROUP

New York City, — Howard McSpadin, president of the AFL's Building and Construction Trades Council, pledged full support of the campaign being conducted by the Jewish Labor Committee to promote racial and religious tolerance.

The Jewish group is carrying on a national appeal for $1,750,000 to combat totalitarian trends.

AFL BUILDING TRADESMEN WIN 15-CENT PAY HIKE

Schenectady, N. Y.—Four building trades unions have won pay increases ranging from 12½ to 15 cents an hour in agreements concluded with the Schenectady Builders Exchange.

The 1,000 union members are employed chiefly on commercial building projects.

Unions involved in the new agreements are the Building Trades Laborers, the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers, the Lathers, and the Carpenters unions.

UPHOLSTERERS' UNION SIGNS NEW CONTRACTS

Sheboygan, Wis.—All seven of the upholstered furniture plants here, employing 400 members of Local 132 of the AFL's Upholsterers' International Union, signed contracts providing for an 8 cents an hour increase, with a July 1 wage reopening clause including the right to strike if agreement is not reached then on the amount of the raise.

PRINTING PRESSMEN WIN $13 WEEKLY WAGE INCREASE

New York City.—Local 2 of the AFL's Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union announced the signing of a new 2-year contract calling for a $13 weekly pay increase for its members.

The agreement, which covers 1,900 pressmen employed by 15 New York newspapers, was ratified by the union's membership by a 4 to 1 margin and formally signed Thursday.

Joseph Dwyer, president of Local 2, termed it "the finest contract our union has ever negotiated," and George L. Berry, president of the international union, said it was "a victory for the orderly processes of collective bargaining, more power to such negotiating processes."

STOCK EXCHANGE UNIT WANTS UNION SECURITY

New York City.—Workers at the New York Stock Exchange voted 403 to 67 in favor of the union shop in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board as required under the Taft-Hartley law.

Officials of the United Financial Employes, of the American Federation of Labor, bargaining agent for Exchange workers, said the demand for a union shop will be included in other requests submitted to management in negotiations for a new contract to replace the current agreement, which will expire on March 1. The present contract, which was to expire on Jan. 31, was extended 30 days by mutual consent of labor and management.

Union Shop Election Requirement Held Waste of Time and Taxpayers' Money

Philadelphia.—Union shop elections required under the Taft-Hartley law were denounced by George Bucher, president of the Billposters' and Upholsterers' Union, as "burning up the taxpayers' money."

Two elections held so far, both won overwhelmingly by the UBU, were unnecessary, Bucher said, and a waste of time and of government and union funds.

Sample ballots and voting instructions were printed in the union's official sign-born employes of the woodwork and carving of the Billposters' Union, where, of 124 eligible to vote, 119 chose the union shop, 3 voted "no" and 1 ballot was void.

The other election, among employes of James A. Kenney, this city's largest commercial casket plant, was won by 90 to 1 with 30 not voting.

"One of the toughest jobs the local ever had," Bucher, who also is a UBU national vice-president, said, "was to organize the Billposters' workers but after 12 years of amicable closed-shop relations with the firm, a majority rule, and a culture that has enriched our own experience."

AFL UPHOLSTERERS GAIN PAID VACATION CLAUSE

Hazelwood, N. C.—What is regarded as something new in paid vacation schedules was inaugurated here in a contract between the Upholsterers' International Union, AFL, and the Tungsets Manufacturing Corp. The furniture workers, members of Local 226, also obtained a new value of 6 cents an hour, bringing their total increase to 8 cents within five months.

Under the plan, employes with more than two months' service but less than one year will receive vacation pay at the rate of $2.50 for each month worked.

Workers with one to five years' service will have a week's paid vacation.

Employes with the five more than five years will receive $2.50 additional for each year's service over five.